

NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE LECTURE

14 January 1955

THE SOVIET STRATEGIC CONCEPT

1. The Communist leaders of the USSR consider their basic objectives to be the consolidation and expansion of Soviet power. Their goal is the ultimate elimination of any power centers capable of competing with or threatening the USSR.

This objective is based, in large part, upon their interpretation of history, derived from the doctrines of Marxism-Leninism; doctrines which they use as a broad guide to their actions.

The basic elements of this interpretation are: (1) the belief that significant social developments result only from forces in conflict, and (2) the belief that the final conflict will occur between capitalism and Communism and will result in the worldwide collapse of capitalism and its replacement by Communism.

2. The key factor here is continuous conflict between opposing social systems. It has been made clear by their spokesmen that while this may eventually take the form of open military war, there will be long periods between military wars. These periods Lenin called "partial war." This is no less war to them -- but involves using means other than full-scale military force.

Here is the area of operations to which they have devoted most of their attention since 1917 because, in their own view, they have at no time possessed adequate military strength to invite open conflict with a world power, such as the U.S. is today and Germany was in 1940.

The German 1935-40 precedent is most instructive:-

The USSR, in August, 1939, concluded a treaty of non-aggression with Nazi Germany to buy additional time to strengthen their armed forces and, through its Secret Protocols, established certain territorial spheres of interest in the Baltics, Poland, and Southeastern Europe. While the Soviets looked upon Germany as the extreme capitalist, or Fascist state with which war would ultimately be unavoidable, they felt that by establishing a modus vivendi between the USSR and Germany they were, in effect, taking advantage of the possibility that Germany would be seriously weakened in a war with the other western, capitalist powers. Here the USSR has shown itself willing to enter into "spheres of interest" agreements in order to avoid the risk of open military conflict.

In a recent statement (N. Y. Times, 10 January 1955, page 2) Otto Kunsinen, a high-ranking member of the CPSU, likened the present policy of the U.S. to that of Hitler Germany, i.e., we were anti-communist, building up armaments, seeking world domination, and hated the Soviet Union.

This is a significant treatment of the U.S. position and it may contain a clue to the present Soviet attitude to the U.S. It reflects the belief of the Soviet leaders that the US will become involved in capitalist wars or at least capitalist depressions, and that by establishing a modus vivendi with the US for the short run the USSR will be able to legitimize its control over the Satellites and take further advantage of wars and depressions of capitalist states to increase its area of expansion.

3. When the Soviet speaks of "peaceful coexistence," to them this is synonymous with "partial war." Despite their recent protestations, there is no reason to believe that they actually accept a concept of permanent or even continuing coexistence. They regard coexistence only as a situation of equilibrium forced upon them by the international power balance which must eventually be replaced by another situation in which they have developed a more favorable power position.

Danger of Slogans "Coexistence" —

2. Para 3: Following passage from Stalin's 1927 speech at 15th Party Congress, often quoted since, gives good insight into what Soviets mean when they speak of coexistence:

"We can not forget the saying of Lenin to the effect that a great deal in the matter of our construction depends on whether we succeed in delaying war with the capitalist countries, which is inevitable but which may be delayed either until the proletarian revolution ripens in Europe, or until colonial revolutions come fully to a head, or finally, until the

capitalist countries fight among themselves over the division of the colonies. Therefore the maintenance of peaceful relations with capitalist countries is an obligatory task with us. The basis of our relations with the capitalist countries consists in admitting the

4. In addition, while they have couched their program in the military terminology of "strategy" and "tactics," they have always thought in much broader terms than their use of this terminology might seem to indicate. "Strategy" has represented for them the general program of a long-range development of Communist power. Their study of "tactics" has provided them with the means for extending their power. Among these, direct military action has been only one among many tactics, and evidently a less desirable one as long as a formidable opposing power center exists. This is as true today as it was under Stalin - despite the many surface changes in the USSR since the Malenkov regime.

6.

5. Neither their view of "strategy" or of "tactics" provide the Soviet leaders with any detailed blue-print for immediate policy decisions. They have to improvise on details just as everyone does, and they have had their reverses -- Korea, Tito, Iran, Greece.

But they do have guide lines to influence the shaping of general Soviet strategic planning and are ready to change their tactics as the power situation or the risks of war dictate. [viz. Korea, Tito, Iran and Greece.]

Events in Korea resulted in persuading the Kremlin we would fight aggression there and elsewhere. This required modification in Soviet tactics since their present policy is based on avoidance of war with USA.

7.

6. By and large, the broad aims of consolidation and expansion of Soviet power dictate at present a policy of perpetual probing to find weak spots in the non-Communist world, and to exploit, tactically, but by means short of general war, any weaknesses discovered. This policy includes as indicated above a willingness, when they meet with stiff opposition, to engage in tactical retreats!

7. As indicated, Soviet policy is tempered by the view that they are not yet ready to take on the US and its allies in general war. They recognize our nuclear superiority as well as the fact that we have more effective means of delivering an atomic attack. They have a healthy respect for our industrial capacity. They are unwilling to initiate any ventures which might jeopardize their control over their own and the Satellites' government apparatus.

However They consider themselves relatively stronger than at an previous time.

They continue to feel That the U.S.A. is their only serious rival.

8. Since the death of Stalin the day-by-day details of Soviet *Strategy*
~~international policy~~ within this general framework are influenced
 additionally by internal factors:

a. the development of the new "collective" leadership, the need
 for bringing to focus of more than one point of view in policy decisions
 and the possibility that a struggle for power within the oligarchy
 might break out over some major issue of economic or foreign policy.

Malenkov vs Khrushchev - The Army

b. the necessity for a "new look" economic policy, with more
 recognition of consumer demand, emphasis upon the need for
 development of a better agricultural program, and possible
 reflection of the "new look" economic policy upon the military program
 (limiting of defense expenditures to present levels). The problems
 of developing a "new look" economic policy (e.g. consumer goods vs.
 heavy industry) might create significant strains within the oligarchy,
 even though heavy industry currently retains the primacy which it has
 always had in economic planning.

~~The Malenkov - Khrushchev Struggle - My chief concern is~~
 We believe that these recent developments within the Soviet Union are
 additional deterrents to the adoption of an aggressive military policy. *to a of*
Guar.

9. However, the Soviet leaders will continue to emphasize all other means of conducting what they regard as the inevitable conflict with the non-Communist world. These other means may perhaps be broadly labelled subversive activities (although many of them are carried out in overt rather than clandestine fashions), an area of activity in which they have numerous tactical directions from Lenin and Stalin, long experience, and considerable success. Their past successes in this area may, in fact, further support a decision on their part to make this the continuing key instrument of Soviet expansion, always firmly backstopped, of course, by the threat inherent in a strong military posture.

Weapons in Their Arsenal to Carry Out This Strategic Concept

10. The deterrent power of a strong defense.

a. Army, air-force, navy, nuclear air and ground defense against air attacks. [Have They concentrated on air defense]

b. Adequate air and nuclear striking force.

c. Importance of military strength in awing the neutralists of Europe, and the uneasy Satellites.

(It has become commonplace to hear people say that USSR could over-run Western Europe in a few weeks. -- Wonder when people will stop saying that.)

These are the weapons they don't propose to use now, but which are the backdrop against which to stage their subversive campaign. (Mao said: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.") It fits in with their emphasis on easing the home front before starting any foreign adventures.

They have not necessarily abandoned forever the idea of military conquest but realize that open use of military power (or even of satellite power) risks general war.

11. Offensive weapons for use in the cold war.

a. Well coordinated propaganda machine (Illustration - BW campaign).

This machine directed to divide our allies, preach neutralism and coexistence. Denounce US as "warmonger" and their allies, Britain, France, Belgium, etc., as "colonialist."

(Cite example of Paris treaties. We kept quiet. They threatened to denounce treaties, cut off conversations, etc., etc., and yet accused us of immoral pressure on French.)

Our press open to them; theirs is closed to us.

b. Satellites (China not included). Use in UN - to support subversive apparatus in Free World - to do any job where USSR wants to keep its hands clean.

(Examples of "volunteer armies" - Korea, Viet-Nam.)

c. Overseas Communist Parties (Cite France, Italy, Indonesia, Japan, Syria.)

d. Communist Trade Unions (WFTU).

13.

e. Communist underground apparatus.

f. Front organizations - World Peace Movement, Youth, Women,
Free Lawyers.

(We are building effective counter -apparatus, but Soviets
have lead here as yet.)

g. The central control and training apparatus in the USSR

(describe briefly). [What defectors have told us]

h. The position of China -- not Satellite, but not wholly free
as long as militarily and economically dependent on USSR.

Can be used for Soviet ends in SEA because of common objectives,
but by agreement rather than on order.

SECRET

14.

12. Where will covert apparatus be used?

Have described the general strategic goals -- the power mechanism
to reach those goals - - Final question -- where to be utilized?

a. Where are weakest areas -- we have already said would probe there --

Here is my analysis -- experts may differ

- (1) S.E.A. (Indo-China
 (Indonesia
 (Burma

But here important to cut in agreement with China -- They
can't dictate.

- (2) Japan - Vital upcoming elections

(Joint USSR-China objectives)

- (3) Middle East - based around keeping Arab-Israeli feud hot
 and Syria's growing chaos.

- (4) Africa -- this deserves watching from South Africa to Algeria.

- (5) South America.

- (6) Europe -- will try to hold its own - and intrigue to block
 beginning of German rearmament.

(Don't put Europe last to minimize importance -- but here if we are
alert we can check their gains and make some ourselves.)

SECRET

15.

13. Conclusions

We are not losing subversive war -- ups and downs --

Up - Iran, Egypt, Guatemala, Trieste

Down - North Viet Nam

In balance - Indonesia, Japan, and much else. *i.e. The Troubled satellite*

We are just developing our techniques. (Once felt money alone
would do it -- i.e., economic recovery -- this not enough.)

Hungary

Must debunk their philosophy, uncover their subversive techniques,
effectively counter them.

It can be done.